

Editor's Notes

Introduction

Shortly after Anne Donchin died in 2014, Edmund Byrne, her mate and executor of her estate, asked me if I would consider looking at her unfinished manuscript on assisted reproductive technologies to see if it could be made publishable. Twice in the preceding few years I had read large chunks of the manuscript in its then current form, and had been very favorably impressed by it. In fact, I had been hoping that Anne would be able to get it published by the time I taught my course on reproductive ethics for the last time. Alas, it was not to be, as ill health caught up with her in the final years of her life.

Given what I knew of the manuscript, my own interest in the area, and the fact that Anne and I were mostly on the same wavelength about a variety of issues, I agreed to take a close look at it with an eye toward making it publishable if at all possible. I knew that that might not be in the cards, as Anne's conception of the project had changed quite a bit over the years. Her first vision was an ambitious new work, described in her Introduction ("Coming to Terms with My Mother"). But then, as ill health limited her energy, she decided to base as much of it as possible on already published work. At the same time, she also altered the focus, attempting to bring the ethics elements as much as possible under the umbrella of human rights theory.

As I read the work, I was blown away by the scope of her thinking. As she drilled down to the underlying issues uniting the apparently disparate topics, she demonstrated a versatility that few of us have, involving hugely different areas--nitty-gritty reproductive ethics and science, feminist theory, moral psychology, and public policy—more versatility than I can muster, for sure! It illustrated for me, once again, the importance of retirement leisure in helping humanities scholars produce work with a broader vision than many of us are capable of while our time and energy are consumed with the demands of teaching and "deliverable" research. And, her notes indicated ambitious plans to incorporate great swaths of more recent writing, some of which I had read, but enough to occupy me for years—while the explosion in feminist thinking produced still more! What I also found was that although some of the chapters were clearly publishable as-is, or with minor copyediting, other parts were quite sketchy or pretty much non-existent except in the form of previously published work.

I reported my findings to Ed, and to Diana Meyers, who had been party to our ruminations about what to do from the beginning. The basic strategies seemed to be these:

1. Find someone (or a team) with all the relevant expertise that could devote significant time to reading the items that Anne wanted to incorporate into the manuscript, write the chapters that were missing, prepare the whole for publication, and find a publisher.
2. Have me organize, copyedit, and bring up to date where possible, the manuscript, and upload it to academic websites such as academia.edu and/or Researchgate.

Despite our desire for a monograph that would be a monument to Anne, we concluded that there were good reasons for choosing the second route. First, it would be difficult or impossible to find scholars with the relevant expertise who were in a position to do the jobs entailed by (1). Second, even were that possible, Anne's voice would necessarily be at least partially lost (and in some areas, wholly lost), given the extensive alterations and additions that would be necessary. Last, although we are all to some extent still in thrall to the ideal of hardcopy monographs as the pinnacle of scholarly success/prominence, there is a lot to be said for the emerging model of internet publishing that facilitates access for low-income scholars, especially those without excellent libraries.

So, with some apprehension, I agreed to (2). And, overall my expectations AND fears were borne out. Some chapters are pretty much as Anne left them, needing only minor copy-editing and formatting. Others were more difficult. Anne's son, John Adams, together with Ed, had gone through Anne's computer, attempting to scan and get to me all relevant material. John provided me with multiple formats of what he considered to be the most recent drafts, and his judgments were mostly accurate, although in some cases it took a lot of checking to be sure. Some chapters were seriously incomplete, though, and there was relevant material among the scans, such as the Chapter 8 section on eugenics that I incorporated despite the fact that Anne clearly intended to revise it. Many of the chapters had lengthy sections of ideas for additional work. In most cases I separated these out into a separate Appendix. Anne was clearly also undecided about where to put quite a bit of material that she had both in her introductory chapter and Chapter 10, which I elected to leave in the latter, deleting it from the former. The titles of Chapters 9 and 10 show where Anne intended to go, and the material in them is from an earlier version. However, in both cases she had published papers on the topics (reproductive tourism, a human rights view of ethics) that, read in conjunction with the manuscript, show where the manuscript was headed. In the last few years, Anne was aided by a research assistant, Bukky Awasogba, who did fact-checking and updating. Anne left notes for additional work of that kind. In a few cases I updated items myself, but in quite a few others I simply left Anne's note to Bukky. Where I updated, corrected, or commented, I prefaced my additions with my initials, as one of my main guiding principles was to preserve Anne's voice. I also updated the Table of Contents, although I provide the original in an appendix. Last, I created a Selected Bibliography, starting with a bibliography Anne had done for Chapter 8. Because many of the references in the rest of the chapters were incomplete, some with obviously erroneous dates, I had to make some fairly wild guesses about the item referred to. Overall, my goal has been to try to give readers the information that would help them find sources, not to prepare a complete and publication-ready bibliography. My main focus was on philosophical works, and thus I omitted most legal cases, government reports, and scientific articles.

Overall, the work I have done has been a pleasure. Again and again I have marveled at Anne's writing. It has also been instructive and interesting to see the less finished work, watching her indecision about how to achieve her goals, and even about what they are! I have also been in awe—a word I do not use lightly, given my age—at the subtlety of her thinking and the breadth of her knowledge. And, as I have worked on this material, I have felt Anne's presence in a way that I know will fade once it's done. I will miss it.

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